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REMARKS

In the Office Action of October 31, 2005, claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 19-20 are herein canceled since they are withdrawn due to the restriction reasons stated below. Claims 1 and 16 are dependent claims from which claims 2-15, 17, and 21-22 depend therefrom. Claims 1 and 16 are herein amended. Claims 21-22 are newly added.

Election/Restrictions

The Office Action groups claims into a Group I having claims 1-18 and a Group II having claims 19-20. The Office Action states that Group I is drawn to a vehicle assembly, classified in class 439, subclass 34 and that Group II is drawn to a method of altering the arrangement of modules, classified in class 29. In the phone conversation of October 24, 2005 Applicants elected and herein affirm the election of Group I without traverse.

Rejection of claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 35 U.S.C. 103

The Office Action states that claims 1-4, 6-7, 11-12, and 14-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Dutta (U.S. Pat. No. 5,599,086).

Amended claim 1 recites the limitations of a vehicle overhead module powerstrip assembly that includes an overhead attachment strip, an electrically conductive strip, and a modular connector. The connector includes electrical contacts having multiple attachment positions along the conductive strip. The connector is removable from the conductive strip and is configured to couple an overhead electronic module to the electrically conductive strip.

The ability to remove and reposition the modular connector and thus the overhead electronic module along the conductive strip allows vehicle passengers to change the position of and rearrange overhead electronic modules of a vehicle. This provides convenience in access to desired overhead electronic modules to multiple passengers. The modular connector

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also allows an increased number of possible arrangements of overhead electronic modules for increased flexibility in design and interior utilization.

Dutta discloses a vehicle track lighting system. The vehicle track lighting system includes a track 18 and an illuminator 24 that slides along the track. The illuminator 24 receives power via contact rails 50 and 52 on the track 18 and via pickups 54 and 56 on the illuminator 24.

Although the illuminator 24 is slidable along the track 18, it is not removable from the track 18. The illuminator 24 includes a slide portion 48 that slides between the flanges 66, 68, 72, and 74 of the track 18. The configuration of the slide portion 48 and the flanges 66, 68, 72, and 74 prevent the illuminator 24 from being removed from the track 18, and especially prevents the pickups 54 and 56 from being removed from the contact rails 50 and 52. This is unlike the claimed overhead electronic module and modular connector, which are removable from the electrically conductive strip.

In order for a reference to anticipate a claim the reference must teach or suggest each and every element of that claim, see MPEP 2131 and *Verdegaal Bros. V. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628. Thus, since Dutta fails to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 1, it is novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance. Since claims 2-4, 6-7, 11-12, and 14-15 depend from claim 1, they too are novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

With respect to claim 4, the Office Action states that the track 18 of Dutta, for which the Office Action refers to as an attachment strip, is disclosed as being flexible. Applicants, respectfully, traverse. The track 18 is rigid to allow for smooth sliding of the illuminator 24 thereon. Nowhere in Dutta is it stated or suggested that the track 18 is or can be flexible. Thus, claim 4 is further novel and nonobvious for the stated reasons.

With respect to claim 11, Applicants assume that claim 11 was inadvertently mentioned with respect to the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejection, since

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on page 6 the Office Action states that Dutta fails to disclose the spreading resistance limitation recited therein. Also, no argument was provided with respect to claim 11 with respect to the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejection.

With respect to claim 12, the Office Action states that Dutta discloses an insulator that separates multiple electrical contacts and has multiple module attachment holes. Applicants, respectfully, traverse. Although the illuminator 24 of Dutta has a slide portion that separates the pickups 54 and 56, the slide portion 48 does not have multiple module attachment holes. Applicants are unable to find any attachment holes in the slide portion 48 or in the illuminator 24. Thus, claim 12 is further novel and nonobvious for the stated reasons.

Claim 16 has similar limitations as that of claim 1 and recites a vehicle overhead console. The vehicle overhead console includes a removable and modular connector with electrical contacts that have multiple attachment positions along an electrically conductive strip. The removable and modular connector is configured to couple and allow separation of said at least one overhead electronic module to and from said at least one electrically conductive strip.

As stated above, the illuminator 24 and the pickups 54 and 56 cannot be removed from and thus cannot be separated from the track 18 of Dutta. Thus, since Dutta fails to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 16, it is also novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance. Since claims 17-18 depend from claim 16, they too are novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dutta.

Applicants submit that since claim 5 depends from claim 1, that it too is novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as put forth above with respect to claim 1.

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Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dutta in view of Woertz (U.S. Pat. No. 3,603,918).

Applicants submit that since claim 9 depends from claim 1, that it too is novel, nonobvious, and is in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as put forth above with respect to claim 1.

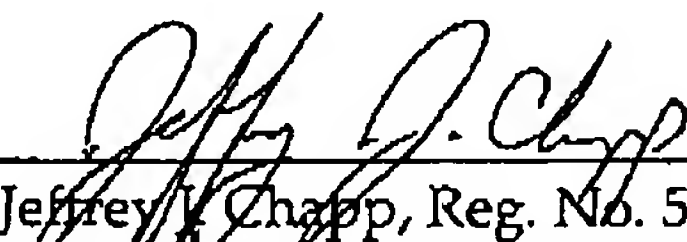
Claims 10-11 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dutta in view of Laser (U.S. Pat. No. 3,569,899).

Applicants submit that since claims 10-11 and 13 depend from claim 1, that they too are novel, nonobvious, and are in a condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as put forth above with respect to claim 1.

In light of the amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all the rejections are now overcome. The Applicants have added no new matter to the application by these amendments. The application is now in condition for allowance and expeditious notice thereof is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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